DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 065 712 VT 016 189

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TITLE Development of Model Career Education Programs Under Part C and Part D of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968.
PUB DATE 15 Jun 72
NOTE 15p.; Presentation at the Commissioner's Conference for Chief State School Officers (Washington, D.C., June 15, 1972)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Career Education; Developmental Programs; Federal Programs; Occupational Guidance; *Program Descriptions; *Research Coordinating Units; *Speeches; *State Federal Support; State Programs; Student Development; Vocational Development; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

Every student in the Watertown, South Dakota School District is involved in a comprehensive career education program which was locally designed and implemented with technical and financial assistance from State and federal sources. The program is designed to help students become aware of and prepared for the world of work. The emphasis of career awareness and career exploration at the elementary school and junior high school levels is on individual development rather than career selection. Senior high school students focus on one or more career clusters and specific decision-making situations. Guidance and counseling services are provided as students develop career goals. Similar programs are being developed in Riverton; Wyoming; Cobb County, Georgia; Norwalk, Connecticut; Mobile, Alabama and other places across the nation. Many are in their second year of operation while others are still in the developmental stage. Federal monies have been used to support these plus other programs including the school-based model effort being administered from the Ohio State University. Research Coordinating Units are playing a significant role in the development of programs within individual states. (Author/GEB)

ED 065712

DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL CAREER EDUCATION PROGRAMS UNDER PART C AND PART D OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1968

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at

COMMISSIONER'S CONFERENCE FOR
CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS
Washington, D. C.

June 15, 1972

VT016189

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DEVELOPMENT OF MODEL CAREER EDUCATION
PROGRAMS UNDER PART C AND
PART D OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
AMENDMENTS OF 1968

Watertown is a community of 14,000 population in the rolling agricultural plains and lake region of northeastern South Dakota. Watertown has a public school population of some 3,900 in six elementary schools, 1 junior high school, and 1 senior high school. Watertown is the site for a Multi-District Career Center which provides career exploratory experiences as well as career preparation centered on career clusters for students from the Watertown Senior High School and from 10 other high schools in the surrounding area. Watertown is also the site of the Lake Area Vocational-Technical School, which offers career preparation programs at the 2-year post-secondary level. Every student in the Watertown School District is involved in a comprehensive career education program, locally designed and implemented with technical and financial assistance from the State Board for Vocational Education and the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education of the U. S. Office of Education.

The Watertown Career Education program is helping students become aware of and prepare for the world of work outside of the schools. The program is designed to acquaint pupils with the modern world of work where they see the implications of school subjects for occupational roles, improve self-concepts, upgrade

achievement and aspirational levels, and involve parents and community in understanding the career development needs of children.

The emphasis of career awareness and career exploration programs at the elementary school and junior high school levels is on individual development, rather than on career selection. The need for individualizing instruction is keenly felt and practiced, since the decisions an individual makes regarding a career are uniquely his own.

Various strategies are used to accomplish the goals of the career education program. Occupational information is integrated into the K-6 curriculum through field trip guidelines, math, reading, art, dramatics, literary and musical curriculum ideas and materials relating to career development; through a revised testing program; and through a study of the career life models of a variety of people. Interest surveys in the sixth grade help students become aware of their growth as individuals.

In the junior high school all students have an opportunity to explore many kinds of careers through exposure to career clusters and to examine the education or training needed to enter them. The transition to career education in the junior high school is one of increasing tempo and intensity. Here students can build on the career awareness base they developed in the elementary grades. The emphasis becomes much more of a

direct correlation between specific disciplines and the world of work. Despite the more specialized approach, each student's course of study is still designed to allow him thorough exposure to all of the career clusters. Coupled with an effective occupational guidance program, the intent is to help a student prepare himself for the career decisions awaiting him.

Senior high school students can explore one or more of the career clusters in depth, and focus on specific decision-making situations. A realistic understanding of careers results as a direct relationship is created between studies in school and skills required for a specific career choice.

As students begin to develop self-established career goals, guidance and counseling services are provided to help each individual plan an educational path toward the tentative goal which he has set. This path may take him through a career preparation program in the Multi-District Career Center, so that he can enter a job immediately upon graduation from high school. On the other hand, the path may take him through a 2-year post-secondary occupational preparation program, such as the ones offered at the Lake Area Vocational-Technical School, enabling him to enter the world of work in a technical-level job. For still other students, the path may involve going through a 4-year college in preparation for a professional-type job. Placement services are provided to insure that each exiting

student is suitably placed, either into a job, a post-secondary occupational preparation program, or a 4-year college or university program.

In the community of Riverton, Wyoming, a comprehensive and articulated K-14 career education program has been brought into operation as a joint venture involving the Riverton School District and the Central Wyoming Community College, with support and technical assistance from the Wyoming State Department of Education and the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education of the U. S. Office of Education. The career education program in Riverton emphasizes individualized instruction, continuous progress through learning activity packages, and an interdisciplinary focusing of basic school subjects around the career development theme. Placement of all exiting students into either a job, an appropriate 2-year post-secondary program, or a 4-year college program is stressed.

In Cobb County, Georgia, a very active career education program is in operation, with the enthusiastic involvement of students of all ages, teachers, parents, and community organizations and businesses.

Comprehensive, interdisciplinary, systematically-organized career education programs have been designed in Norwalk, Connecticut and Mobile, Alabama. Multi-media instructional materials have been

prepared and assembled, inservice training activities for teachers and counselors have been scheduled, and the programs are being readied for actual classroom operation when the Norwalk and Mobile students begin the next school year in September of 1972.

These are just a few random examples of the intense activity which is taking place across the country, as local school districts grapple with the "grassroots" problems of developing and implementing career education programs appropriate to their own localities.

Many of these programs are now well into their second year of operation, while others, recently initiated, are still in the developmental and design stage. All of the programs have certain common features, such as the attempt to provide career education opportunities along the entire age continuum from early childhood through adulthood, the attempt to provide vertical articulation of career education activities from pre-school or kindergarten through adult education, the attempt to cut across traditional subject-area lines and unify and focus all educational experiences around the career development theme, and the emphasis on the responsibility of schools to place all exiting youngsters either into an appropriate job or into a higher level of education which will lead the student toward his self-established career goal. All of the programs are characterized by wide community involvement in the career education process, and by a high level

of enthusiasm on the part of students, teachers, parents, and community groups.

During the past four months, 30 highly qualified leaders from universities, State Departments of Education, and local school systems have traveled across the United States, in teams of three, looking in detail at some of the "grassroots" career education programs which are emerging. Under sponsorship of the Bureau of Adult, Vocational, and Technical Education, these consultants assembled at the end of May to compare and synthesize their findings and observations. They were unanimous in their opinion that career education programs have developed much more rapidly than anyone had anticipated, and that solid, significant progress is being made in the design and implementation of career education programs in many local districts in all parts of the country. They commented too upon the way in which each local district, while working toward the common goals of career education, was tailoring the specifics of its career education program to the unique conditions and needs of its own locality.

Much of the impetus for this broad, locally-based developmental effort in career education has come through Part C and Part D of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. Part C provides funds for research and development work in vocational education, including the conduct of experimental and pilot projects. Part D provides funds for the operation of three-year exemplary programs designed to

familiarize elementary and secondary school students with the broad range of occupations for which special skills are required and to broaden and improve career preparation programs for students in grades 10 through 14, with attention given to occupational guidance, counseling, and placement. These two parts of the Vocational Education Act provide very useful vehicles for the development, in accordance with the intent of Congress, of broadly-conceived career education programs. Although the emphasis under Parts C and D has not been in higher education and adult education, participating school districts are able to articulate their K-14 career education activities with adult education and higher education programs supported from other sources.

In the fiscal year which is ending this month, $8 million from the U. S. Commissioner's discretionary Part D funding have been used to support one career education model project in each State and Territory of the United States. Last fall, the U. S. Commissioner of Education announced his willingness to turn over to the States an additional $9 million of discretionary Part C funding for the initiation of one or more additional career education projects in each State and Territory. I am pleased to inform you that every single State and Territory responded favorably to this offer, and submitted plans for the activation of a model career education program at one or more sites. These plans were reviewed and approved, and appropriate grants were awarded; practically all of these grants were in the hands of the States by January or February of 1972.

The school districts which were designated by the Chief State School Officers as recipients of the Part C funding have been working all this spring in developing plans and materials for their career education projects, and many of them will be conducting inservice training activities for their teachers during the coming summer months. Most of these projects are already underway and all of them will be in full swing in September of 1972.

Both the Part C and the Part D career education projects are viewed as joint local/State/Federal endeavors. Program Officers from the Central and Regional Offices of the U. S. Office of Education work jointly with personnel from State Departments of Education in providing technical assistance to the local project staffs. In return, the State and Federal program officers are learning much from the practical experience being generated in the local school systems as career development theories are applied in actual classroom settings under a wide variety of environmental conditions.

Cross-fertilization of the many career education projects, and interchange of the creative ideas and techniques which are emerging must be provided for, if we are to expedite the developmental process which is underway. To illustrate, let me utilize this map.

As you know, at Commissioner Marland's direction, approximately $7.5 million of R&D funding from the Cooperative Research Act have been devoted to the development and validation of large-scale school-based career education models in six selected

school districts, with coordination and technical assistance being provided by Ohio State University. This effort is illustrated on the map before you.

In the meantime, small-scale career education projects are now well into their second school year of operation, with support from Part D of the Vocational Education Act, in one school district in each State. These are illustrated by the symbols on this map. Further, the additional career education model projects which were made possible by Commissioner Marland's release of the $9 million of discretionary Part C funding are now coming into operation in each State, as illustrated by the symbols on this map.

So we now have career education model projects in operation in well over 100 local school districts across the country. The problem of providing for cross-fertilization and exchange of ideas among all of these projects is a formidable one, but significant steps are being taken in this direction. In December of 1971, we brought together the local-level directors of all of the Part D projects, along with State-level program officers who were involved in the projects, personnel from Ohio State University's school-based model effort, and Federal program officers to exchange information and share ideas. Several of our Regional Offices have sponsored similar meetings on a Regional basis, involving local and State

personnel from both the Part C and the Part D projects. The information collected by the consultants who recently visited many of the career education projects across the country is being developed into manuscript form by the R&D Center at North Carolina State University and will be published and widely disseminated, hopefully by the end of this summer. Other measures are being planned to expedite the interchange of ideas and materials between the projects.

But National and Regional interchange of information is only part of the problem. Coordination of career education activities at the State level is a matter of equal concern. We might take one State as an example in this regard.

This map shows the career education model projects in the State of Kentucky. Kentucky now has 6 career education model projects in operation. One of these is supported with the Federal discretionary Part D funds, one is supported with the Federal discretionary Part C funds, two are supported under the State portion of Part D funds, and two are supported under the State portion of Part C funds. This provides a network of career education pilot projects, stretching across the State. Kentucky's Vocational Research Coordinating Unit, or RCU, based at the University of Kentucky, is providing technical assistance to all of the projects.* This includes bringing staff members of the six projects together at periodic intervals. At these periodic meetings, each project staff gives a verbal report of its progress to date,

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* Dr. Worthington's presentation was made using visuals.

all the projects share their latest ideas and materials, and knowledgeable consultants from both within and without the State bring fresh viewpoints and new developments to the assembled project staffs. This cross-fertilization between the projects and the injection of new ideas from outside tends to hasten the developmental process and maximize the sharing, rather than the duplication, of effort.

RCU's in other States, such as Illinois, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Nevada are playing key roles in the design, development, and coordination of the States' career education model projects.

The RCU's, which have been in operation in most States for more than five years, have much to offer in facilitating the development of career education. One very obvious role which RCU's can perform is the dissemination of information about career education. Several RCU's, notably those in Tennessee, Oklahoma, New Jersey, Florida, and Pennsylvania, have developed extensive and sophisticated capabilities for the dissemination of R&D informatior on a Statewide basis. It is anticipated that the current Federal and State research and development efforts in career education will bear fruit at an increasing rate over the next several years. Many of the State RCU's are in an excellent position, through channels which are already established, to gather the results and the products of the R&D work in career education and to disseminate these widely to local educators throughout their State.

Many RCU's also have established capability to provide consultative services to local districts, in order to help them plan and design effective career education programs based on the backlog of existing research and utilizing instructional materials and techniques emerging from developmental projects. Because of their linkage with the ERIC System, ARM, AIM, and other informational sources, the RCU's are in a good position to be aware of the latest research results and developmental products which would be useful to local districts engaged in planning and designing career education programs. Because of their intimate knowledge of conditions within their States, the RCU's are in a strategic position to help local districts tailor career education techniques and materials drawn from elsewhere to fit the specific needs of their own local situations.

After helping local districts to plan and design career education programs, RCU's can move into another role: providing technical assistance to districts, on an ongoing basis, to help them actually implement their program. As a multiplicity of new materials on career education become available during the coming months, the RCU's, in their technical assistance role, can serve an important function in helping to build these new materials into ongoing programs, adapting and fitting them to unique situations in various local districts.

In still another role, RCU's can help local districts to design appropriate evaluation plans for their career education programs.

In some cases, the RCU's might actually conduct the evaluation studies. In this way, both the RCU's and the local districts can gain insights as to the effectiveness of various approaches, and can use these insights for further revision and refinement of the original program designs.

Another role, which some RCU's have already been performing successfully, is to design and sponsor R&D projects to develop, test, and validate instructional materials and program components for career education. Both the Florida and the Illinois RCU's have planned and launched major university-based R&D studies to develop and validate career education instructional materials. Much of this kind of developmental work on materials and components need not be undertaken separately by each individual school district, but could better be done in one centralized project and then made available to districts throughout the State.

In any event, whether a State Department of Education utilizes its RCU, some other administrative unit, or some combination of units, State-level coordination of career education activities is an essential consideration to which careful attention should be given. It is important, too, that State Departments of Education begin now to consider their future role in the diffusion of tested career education components which will emerge from the pilot projects and model-building efforts. The task of creating career education models in selected districts will have long-range

advantage only to the extent that the components from the pilot projects are successfully diffused and installed in other districts throughout the State. The study of diffusion and adoption strategies, and the laying of plans for such activities in the coming months and years must be given high priority by State Department of Education personnel. Only in this way can the States insure payoff from their pilot projects and model-building efforts in career education.

All too briefly, I have attempted to sketch out for you the current status and some of the anticipated future trends in the development of model career education programs, as a joint State/Federal endeavor, under Part C and Part D of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968. This has been an exciting effort so far, and the results have been far greater than the level of funding would lead one to anticipate. The ferment of activity which has been generated by this relatively small investment of funds suggests that career education is indeed "an idea whose time has come" and indicates that Commissioner Marland's call for high priority action in this area is timely and responsive to critical needs in our society and our educational system.